

JOURNAL OF FREEDOM.

RALEIGH, N. C.  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1865.  
SALUTATORY.

The issue of this paper, to-day, advocating the truly republican principle of Universal Suffrage, marks an era in the history of the State of North Carolina, and the undersigned is proud of the fact that he is the humble instrument designated by the Supreme Intelligence, which controls all things, to effect it. Six months, just past, have placed our beloved country in a position far advanced towards the realization of that glorious period when, in practice as well as theory, our government will be truly democratic. During that time an unholy rebellion has been closed, millions of bondsmen declared and acknowledged to be free, and the doors of the South have been opened to Free Speech and Free Press. An American citizen can now express loyal sentiments in any section of the United States without fear of personal violence. The contrast which this day presents, in its generous promulgation of opinions, to the tyrannical restrictions imposed on certain classes in the South a short half year since, is beyond parallel, and the fact will be recorded by the future historian as an almost miraculous victory of the principles of free government.

But the victory is only half accomplished, and to aid in its full realization the JOURNAL has been established. The theory of our government is "the consent of the governed," as expressed through the ballot-box in their votes for rulers. Manifestly, then, every citizen who is not disqualified by crime, or some other equally cogent reason, should be allowed a voice in making laws to which he is amenable. This right is now denied to persons of African descent, the denial being based on an unreasonable prejudice, which, however, is entertained by many eminently good men in all sections of the country. The removal of this prejudice and the establishment of laws based on principles of true equality, the education and elevation of our people, and the building up the regenerated South on a firm and lasting basis of Republicanism, are the objects to which this paper is dedicated.

With the above brief statement as his platform, the undersigned assumes the editorial control of the JOURNAL OF FREEDOM. He is comparatively a stranger in this community, and his principles are stranger still; but he hopes by honorable dealing with all to gain respect for himself as a man and perhaps for his doctrines. EDWARD P. BROOKS.

THE COLORED CONVENTION.

The Convention of the colored men of the State of North Carolina met at the Methodist African Church yesterday morning at 10 o'clock, about one hundred and twenty delegates being present. Mr. JOHN GOOD, of Craven county, was appointed temporary Chairman, and Messrs. JOHN RANDOLPH and GEORGE W. PRICE, also of Craven, were appointed temporary Secretaries. Committees on credentials, to prepare rules for the government of the Convention, and on permanent organization, were also appointed, after which the Convention took a recess until two o'clock in the afternoon. The natural disarrangements of our office, occasioned by the hurried issue of this, our first number, prevents us from giving a full report this morning. Next week, however, we will furnish our readers with the proceedings, official and entire.

So far, this convention is a credit to the colored men. It has been dignified in its proceedings, and the general tone and manner of the members almost unanimously has been conciliatory and conservative. Mr. GOOD, the temporary Chairman, and Mr. RANDOLPH, the Secretary, have given evidence of a knowledge of parliamentary law which is as praiseworthy as unexpected. The leading members are earnest and honest in their desire to preserve peace and harmony and their efforts in that direction are untiring. The courtesy exhibited yesterday by speakers towards each other is remarkable, and we hope that this pleasing feature of the convention will be maintained throughout its whole session.

It is fair to predict from what we have already seen that this first effort of the colored men of the State to take their positions as free and independent citizens will, so far as they are concerned, be a decided success.

SUFFRAGE AND PREJUDICE.

If people will allow themselves to be guided by common sense, laying aside their prejudices, the great political questions which have arisen with the new state of affairs in the South will be settled amicably and without difficulty. Time was when the free colored population of North Carolina exercised the right of suffrage with the whites, and the records of that period do not show that the State was injured by it, nor would any of the many men now alive, who received colored votes, be willing, we think, to admit that they were degraded by them. Many a man who talks of the degradation of such a thing has, in times past, placed his vote side by side in the same ballot-box with that of a colored man. This right was only taken from the free colored man because of its influence over the slaves. There are no slaves now, and consequently no pernicious influence can be exerted if this right is re-established. Plainly, if it is not re-established, it will be on account of prejudice. Some of the best blood of North Carolina flows in the veins of those who are prescribed on account of color. Men whose intelligence is acknowledged, even by their enemies, to be superior to that of many who now exercise the precious right unquestioned, are also placed in the back-ground, merely on account of color. No sensible man can for a moment oppose the extension of the privilege of the elective franchise to the colored man on account of his lack of intelligence. It is only necessary to go to any large city in order to find more ignorant and debased voters than they would make; in fact, to find such men it is not necessary to leave this section. There are hundreds, aye thousands, of freedmen who, while slaves, were trusted by their masters in business transactions of great importance, and there is an equal if not a larger number of white voters, proportionately, in every community, who are not entitled to, and do not receive, the same confidence. Manifestly, then, the exclusion of the colored man from a privilege which some of them are equally fitted to exercise with some of the whites, is merely the result of prejudice, which prejudice arises from different reasons.

One of these reasons is the vanity of human nature. It is a gratifying thought that a man is the superior of another, and pleases the vanity of men the world over. Admitting all this to be true—i. e., that the white man is the superior of the black, and no one disputes it at this time—to be consistent we should carry out the doctrine to the fullest extent. The result is clear; finally only one man in the country would be qualified to vote. He would be the one who impudently arrogated to himself superiority over all others of his or any other race.

Another and equally powerful reason is selfishness. Mankind is loth to give up his power, or rather to divide it. The Know Nothings were opposed to dividing the power of the ballot-box with foreigners, and now Know Nothings and foreigners are opposed to extending the same privilege to the natives—natives, too, who have proved themselves true among the faithless. The theory that this is a white man's country is based on this same selfish principle, and has its origin in the most ungenerous spirit which can control the mind of man. A free invitation is extended by our government to the oppressed of all the world to take rest within its domains and to enjoy freedom of religion and political opinions. Yet some of the people who compose this government are, in their blindness, so inconsistent as to selfishly belie this great inducement which has always been the great incentive to emigration. In their selfishness and vanity they overstep the bounds of Republicanism, and are striving to establish a government based on principles far from Democratic, and almost as exclusive as that of a limited monarchy.

A simple and just application of the great principle on which our government is based—the consent of the governed—would obliterate all distinction on account of color, or race, and the African would have the same right to a voice in making laws which he has to obey, as the Irishman. No one will pretend for a moment to deny the right of a native of Irish, German or English descent to vote, and it seems to the unprejudiced a strange piece of inconsistency that an exception to this generally accepted rule should be made against the descendants of Africans.

EVIDENCE OF FREEDMEN.

The law is the great panacea for all of our social and political evils. It is the theory of government that all mankind, from king to peasant, is equal before the legal tribunals of their country. The guarantee which our government gives to its citizens of a fair trial before the law for all offences is the strongest bond by which they are attached to it. The strong may not impose upon the weak, nor the rich oppress the poor, for the law equalizes all things.

Such is the theory; but what is the practice? There is a certain class of the inhabitants of this community whose evidence before courts of justice is worthless, and men who pretend to be the representatives of the Democratic people openly announce that they advocate the continuation of this oppressive prescription. In other words they say that they will uphold the pernicious and anti-republican doctrine of not allowing the negro to testify in our courts. They will give to the white man unlimited power to grind and oppress the colored man; if he sees fit, and to do it with the sanction of that authority which we are all bound to respect. One white man may seek redress from injury inflicted by another of the same or of any other race; but a black man, should these outrageous doctrines predominate, must grin and bear his indignities no matter how aggravating they may be.

Truth is to be found in the hut oftener than in the palace, and does not leave a man on account of his color. It is folly to say that because a man is black, he cannot swear truly. Such a theory is a base libel on the religious teachers of the blacks during their slavery, and that class, if no other should be active in proving its falsity. Except the puerile argument that "he is a nigger" there is no other reason advanced against negro evidence. "How would you like to have a nigger testify against you?" is a question often asked of the advocates of equal rights, and it is easily answered. If the negro feared the law and respected his oath, as a religious and political obligation, his testimony would be entitled to as much confidence as a white man's, and take them hap-hazard, christian or no christian, we think as much truth would be averaged by a black tongue as by a white one.

But the great injustice inflicted on the blacks by the restriction to the power which it would give to unprincipled men to abuse an unoffending class of people. We all know of instances where white men have taken advantage of quibbles in the law, to gain their points in business dealings with other whites, but here the door is opened wide for untold outrages. The future of the freedmen, in the case they are not protected against encroachment by being allowed to testify in our courts, is fearful to contemplate. They will be the victims of any scoundrel who may choose to perjure himself and will be helpless. The State will lend her aid to swindlers and perjurers in their nefarious schemes to plunder innocent, law-abiding citizens.

To avert such a sad condition of affairs should be the object of every humane man. In every State of the North colored men have the same rights in court as white men, and justice demands laws of the same kind in the South. Nor is it alone on the grounds of doing justice to the Freedmen that the South should give them this right. It will be found that, as a matter of conciliatory policy, it is absolutely necessary. With pure and honest men like Sumner, Wilson, Sherman and others, leading in the control of the affairs of the nation, it is useless to expect that the constitution of any State will be considered "republican in form," which does not guarantee to every man the right to defend himself and his property before its legal tribunals. Such expectations are preposterous, for the men who are the acknowledged leaders of the national legislature are lovers of Justice.

In every United States court, the testimony of colored men is taken in the same manner as that of white men.

We commend this subject to the attention of the State Convention which meets in this city next Monday.

The Provost Marshal of Freedmen, at Shreveport, La., has arrested the Sheriff, District Attorney, Judge and Jury of the Ninth Judicial District, of that State for trying a colored man on a charge of larceny. It is claimed that jurisdiction over Freedmen, during the existing interpretation of the civil law, belongs exclusively to the Freedmen's Bureau. The Judge will take an appeal and has given notice to that effect.

THE SUBMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN WHITES.

Day after day, week after week and month after month, since the surrenders, have presented an unvaried programme at the White House. Self-appointed and semi-officially appointed delegations have waited on President Johnson, composed of men from the South, to represent to him the condition of affairs in their particular localities. The primary object of the visits of this class to the national capital is to gain pardon; and to hasten that end by bringing themselves prominently before the eye of the Executive, they arrogate to themselves the responsibility of representatives of the people, and with unblushing impudence offer their selfish advice to him. It would be well for the President and the country if he would recollect that these people are traitors, until he pardons them, and that it is for their interest to make it appear that matters are smooth in the late insurrectionary States, and that, therefore, their representations may not always be reliable. In his speech made during his interview with the "Representatives of nine Southern States," on the 11th, President Johnson says that he hears the same report from every Southern man who comes before him, viz:—

"We made the issue. We set up the union of the States against the institution of slavery; we selected as arbitrator the God of battles; the arbitration was the sword. The issue was fairly and honorably met. Both the questions presented have been settled against us, and we are prepared to accept the issue."

"With generalities that do not even glitter," a large number of the people engaged in the late damnable insurrection, talk in the same manner, and perhaps they believe themselves to be honest, speaking in a general sense; but there is a question whether they really are or not. For instance you cannot meet a man who is not willing to "accept the logic of events;" but his logic may be bad. Bad logic has been cherished in the South for years, and had much to do with the cause of the war. It may be that a man is willing to say publicly that slavery is dead; but he may privately perpetuate its horrors by whipping his free servants or otherwise abusing them after the manner of the peculiar code of the institution, because it has been considered a logical sequence that the colored man misbehaved himself, peculiar punishment followed.

From close observation we are of the opinion that a great many of the Southern people are superficial in their submission to the result of the late war, and particularly in their allegiance to the government. The majority of those who were engaged in the late rebellion are ready and willing to yield a hearty support to the authorities, but those who do not expect to perform any other deed of patriotism or loyalty than to lay down their rebellious arms (by compulsion) and abstain from acts known as treasonable by their overtress. This is really the submission of the Southern people. It is skin deep with many, and it is a pity that the authorities cannot pierce through this skin and discover the rottenness beneath, particularly as those who are obliged to apply for pardons are of the guilty class.

THE RECENT ELECTION.

In an article on the "Submission of Southern Whites" in this issue, we take the ground, unqualifiedly, that the majority of the Southern people are heartfelt in their loyalty to the United States government. The recent election proves conclusively the truth of the statement in the same article that the minority are superficial in their new found allegiance; for in many instances prominent Union men—those who were identified with the Conservative or Peace party during the war—have been defeated on account of their Union sentiments. It is with reluctance that we publish this fact to the world, but our duty as truthful chroniclers of events obliges us to do it. The immediate influence of this election on the reputation of the State may be modified by the action of the successful candidates when they take their seats in the convention; but it is to be feared that such will not be the result. Men who entertain the ultra-rebel views expressed in the South Carolina and Alabama conventions are members of the body which meets here next Monday, and they will not be able to keep down the rebellious spirit which possesses them. The judgment of many good men in the country will be biased by the acts of this faction, and the whole State will be held responsible for their doings.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE COLORED MAN.

Previous to the war the slaves of the South were remarkable for their docility, and although in some localities they largely exceeded the whites in numbers, they carried the chains of servitude quietly, and cases of insurrection were rarely heard of. During the war, many of the blacks exerted their inherent right to gain freedom, which right was legalized by proclamations and laws originated by the Executive and legislative branches of the government. Aside from this, however, they preserved their reputation as quiet, unobtrusive people, and notwithstanding the fact that the contest raging about them was pregnant with importance to their future, they maintained the same respect for their duty, as it had been taught to them, as ever. In short, while having the power to prove themselves a serious element of disturbance; they conducted themselves in a manner which should gain for them the name of peace-loving and submissive people.

They have been freed, by no act of their own; but as the natural sequence of the rebellious sins of their late masters, who betray their chagrin at their just punishment by pursuing a course towards these innocent people of vindictiveness and oppression, which in many instances results in a system worse than slavery itself. This remark, we are happy to say, does not apply to all of the late slaveholders in the community, for a few of them have truly accepted the logic of events, and are honestly striving to accommodate themselves to the great change which has occurred in the social relations of the South. Notwithstanding this, the negroes continue to sustain their claims as peaceable residents. They have with wonderful rapidity arrived at a full appreciation of their new status. There may be exceptions to this statement, but they are few and far between, for the great majority of the Freedmen have become self-sustaining, and are no longer an expense to the government. The records of the issuing commissaries of the Department of North Carolina, will show that more whites than blacks have drawn rations during the past two months. After generations of dependence it could hardly be expected of them that they would immediately assume the responsibilities of self-support and independence; more particularly when their dependence was suddenly, almost rudely, torn from them. Many of them, however, are engaged in lucrative business pursuits, and sustain the government by paying taxes on incomes which show that they possess managing talent as commercial men. In the vicinity of Newbern in this State and all along the Atlantic coast there are instances where colored men conduct and supervise extensive farms, indicating ability which is as remarkable as it is unexpected. All things considered then, the present condition of the Freedmen warrants the highest praise.

Arguing from the past and present, a bright future presents itself to the colored men of the United States. The immutable laws of right and wrong are adjusting themselves rapidly, and the right is far advanced towards predominance. That almost incalculable stride, the result of the war,—i. e. the downfall of slavery—will be followed by other strides, perhaps slower, but equally sure in their accomplishment. By pursuing honest avocations, as the majority now do, the Freedmen will increase the respect which they have already gained, even from their enemies, and in the end will be acknowledged, as they deserve, to be, as one of the most useful classes of community. Prejudice will wear away, and equal justice will be meted out alike to all men. In short, with a proper use of the strength of character developed by the Freedmen in their new surroundings, they will eventually take their proper place in our political arena as men.

God hasten the time.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL C. B. FISK, Assistant Commissioner for the Freedmen's Bureau for the State of Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia, has recently been addressing the people of Tennessee on the policy of the Government relative to Freedmen's affairs. He recently addressed the inhabitants of Spring Hill, Tenn., on the same subject; after which, he was presented by a series of resolutions, endorsed by large numbers of citizens, in which they heartily endorsed the action of the Government, and expressed their intention to faithfully carry out the wishes of the Government in respect to the Freedmen.

RICHMOND has at last a thoroughly loyal paper. The *New Nation* is edited by JAMES W. HUSKINOT, formerly of the *Fredericksburg Christian Banner*, and it tells a great deal of honest truth.

MR. GREELY'S ADDRESS.

In our issue to-day will be found the moderate and christian-like address of Horace Greeley to the colored people of North Carolina. His admonitions to be hopeful, be patient, be peaceful, be diligent, to respect themselves and to remain where they belong, should be duly heeded by those for whom they are intended. No one, who is acquainted with the character of the freedmen, can for a moment doubt that he will be hopeful, patient and peaceful. Years of unrequited toil and servitude, patiently and peacefully endured, hoping for the "day of jubilee," prove this. But in their new surroundings they can be taught to respect themselves more than they do.

The system of slavery which generated in them qualities of patience, peacefulness and hope, also deprived them to a certain extent of the spirit of manhood. How could a slave respect himself—the property of another? But now he is free, and without restraint will be entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," as he can gain it by honest endeavors, and will therefore, as a natural consequence, very soon assume the dignity of a free man, commanding respect from all.

The love of home and familiar localities is one of the most prominent features of the character of the colored man. They cling to old associations with a tenacity that is remarkable, and already thousands of the refugees from slavery are returning to their old homes. Mr. Greeley need not be afraid that they will become a race of wanderers, unless forced to it by the vindictiveness of their late oppressors.

THE SOUTH CAROLINA CONVENTION.

The only prominent delegate in the South Carolina convention, who, by the reports we have received, seems to have a due appreciation of the changed condition of affairs, is JAMES L. ORR. He has introduced measures looking to a reorganization of the State government, in detail; so that it will be a nearer approach to the voice of the people than heretofore. In striking contrast with Mr. ORR's truly democratic loyalty, is an effort made by Mr. WILLIAM WALLACE, a stay at home rebel, who presented resolutions recognizing the arch-traitor as "our former noble and beloved Chief Magistrate, Jefferson Davis," whose blood the "fanatics of the North," are shrieking for. The ordinance of secession was repealed, merely repealed. Slavery except as punishment for crime, after due conviction, was abolished in the State forever. The spirit of the whole body was decidedly rebellious. Messrs. Conner, Wallace and Rose were appointed as a delegation to Washington to intercede in behalf of Jeff. Davis. President Johnson's policy was endorsed.

Free Discussion in the South.

Many entertain fears that the free promulgation of opinions in the South will be violently interfered with. We are not of that class, as the establishment of our paper most emphatically asserts. We believe that the Southern people are now honest in a desire to hear both sides of every question, and that they will tolerate free discussion of loyal opinions at all times. In this connection the following from a recent speech of Professor Greene, of Rhode Island, before the National Teachers Association, will be interesting, reflecting as it does the ideas of those afar off:—

"Education must be diffused throughout the South. Black and white 'poor white' and rich white, must be educated. Not to educate them is to prepare for another civil war. To keep up perpetual jealousies, hatreds and abuses, as has been the case for the last thirty years, is only to cherish the cancer that has been gnawing at the vitals of our republic. Shall it be done any longer? Gentlemen of this association, let us buckle on the armor, and meet the new exigency of our times. Before the war no Northern teacher dared to discuss the whole truth at the South. In morals there must be one code for the North and one for the South. There could be no free discussion in all our political contests. Southern men could come before a Northern audience and speak their sentiments freely, even vilify with impunity our ways and institutions, but the instant a Northern man attempted at the South to utter sentiments at all condemnatory of Southern institutions or Southern life, he was forced to leave the country. Is it to be so now? Can we not as educators go boldly into the Southern States and teach the truth? If not, I pray God that martial law may prevail in every Southern State till Northern men may discuss educational, political, social, moral, and religious topics in every part of the South as freely as in Faneuil Hall!"

CONNECTICUT votes on the question of negro suffrage next Monday.